

Stop Sign Fact Sheet

All-way stop signs are NOT speed control devices. We receive many requests from people who want four-way or all-way stops put in place to slow down speeding drivers. Studies show that stop signs only influence motorists to slow down approximately 150 feet before and after the stop sign. Speeds actually increase at mid-block locations to the original speeds and often higher as drivers attempt to make up for lost time.

All-way stop signs do not reduce traffic volumes. Before and after studies show that stop signs have little or no impact on vehicle volumes.

Unnecessary stop signs result in unacceptable levels of stop sign violations and lead to disrespect for all traffic signs. Stop sign compliance studies show that when all-way stop control was installed but not warranted, an average of 30% of the motorists approaching the intersection do not come to a complete stop. In general, if people see no reason for the stop sign, they disrespect the sign. Inappropriate signs become part of the landscape and their effectiveness is reduced.

All-way stop signs do not always increase safety or reduce collisions at intersections. Safety may be reduced because drivers will disregard the all-stop sign. Pedestrians may be lured into a false sense of security by the presence of a stop sign because they assume that drivers will stop. Young children who are brought up to believe that people obey laws are the most vulnerable victims. Other motorists may also assume a motorist will stop because of the presence of the sign and enter the intersection when it is not safe to do so.

All-way stop control may reduce the number of right-angle and left with opposing through collisions. However, there is a potential increase in the number of rear-end and fixed-object collisions, especially if there is a high volume of traffic being required to stop unnecessarily.

Unwarranted stop signs lead to air and noise pollution, as well as increased fuel consumption. Residents living closest to the intersection experience an increase in traffic noise from vehicles stopping and accelerating (tire noise and engine noise). Stopping and accelerating also increases environmental emissions and fuel consumption.

Proper Use of All-Way Stop Control

The purpose of all-way stop control (3-way or 4-way) is to assign right-of-way to traffic approaching an intersection. Stop signs should only be used where an engineering analysis indicates the usage of stop signs is warranted. The following factors are considered:

- **Traffic Volume** - All-way stop control may be recommended where there are large traffic volumes (vehicles and pedestrians) approaching the intersection from all directions and the volume of traffic approaching from each street is close to being equal.
- **Collision History** - All-way stop control may be recommended where there is a high incidence of right turn and/or left turn with on-coming traffic collisions.

If you're experiencing speeding problems on your street, contact the Fargo Police Department's Traffic Safety Unit at 241-1437 or police@cityoffargo.com.